

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Ky public libraries pass milestone with more than 20 million visits last year

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FRANKFORT, Ky. – For the first time, Kentucky’s public libraries recorded more than 20 million visits by patrons who checked out more than 30 million books and other items from the libraries’ collections in 2011, according to statistics compiled by the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) from annual reports submitted by Kentucky’s 118 public library systems.

Almost 2.5 million Kentuckians, 57 percent of the state’s population, are registered to use library services.

Among the variety of services available, public libraries provided 4,127 computers free-of-charge for public use. During nearly 5 million computer sessions in 2011, Kentuckians used library computers for creating resumes, searching and applying for jobs, accessing e-government resources, doing homework for school at all levels, obtaining information for small business applications and searching for information on a variety of topics. Classes at libraries provided instruction for 35,000 Kentuckians in using electronic resources.

The 20,119,053 visits to the libraries in 2011 was a nearly 2 percent increase over 2010.

“These numbers demonstrate that public libraries have become more important than ever to Kentuckians during the economic recession. Public libraries are providing a wide range of services that meet the needs of Kentuckians as never before. The tax payer is definitely seeing a big return on their investment in the public library,” said Wayne Onkst, state librarian and commissioner of KDLA.

Books remain the most popular service in libraries. The number of books checked out in Kentucky’s public libraries increased by 170,000 to more than 20 million. In addition to printed books, the number of e-books checked out by public libraries increased dramatically to more than 200,000.

Kentuckians also attended programs in libraries in record numbers. More than 1.22 million attended programs planned especially for children, an 8 percent increase over 2010, in addition to Kentuckians of all ages who attended the 58,000 programs held in libraries.

Libraries are continuing to look to future services that Kentuckians need. In addition to more computers, wireless access to the Internet is now available with Wi-Fi hotspots in 115 of the public library systems. Remote access to library information and services is also provided by 112 library systems.

“It’s exciting to see the level of activity from people of all ages at our public libraries. Kentuckians are continuing to use the services, resources and information at our public libraries at an increasing rate, and libraries have stepped up to the challenge of meeting those needs in a multitude of ways,” said Onkst.

KDLA provides equitable access to quality library and information resources and services, as well as helps public agencies ensure that legislatively mandated documentation of government programs is created, efficiently maintained, and made accessible. For more information on KDLA resources, programs and services visit www.kdla.ky.gov or call 502-564-8300 ext. 315.